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HCR 3 COMMENDING AND SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ERADICATE FRUIT FLIES IN HAWAII

Statement for
House Committee on
Agriculture
Public Hearing - February 1, 1989

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HCR 3 recognizes the fruit industry in Hawaii, the adverse impacts of fruit flies to that industry, and commends the United States Department of Agriculture on their efforts to eradicate fruit flies in Hawaii.

Our comments on this concurrent resolution do not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

As appropriately noted in the "where as" clauses of HCR 3, the fruit fly problem is an ongoing concern of the agricultural industry in Hawaii. As such, it is also a major concern of the state as a whole and has been an area of intense research by the University of Hawaii and particularly by the College of Tropical Agriculture. The recent efforts of the USDA with regard to the development of the fruit fly sterilization facility at Waimanalo and the initiation of a biological control program on Maui represent examples of the many efforts by the USDA and other researchers to develop methods to control fruit flies in Hawaii. It should be recognized that no one method is likely to be 100 percent successful and that continuing research into various eradication techniques coupled with objective monitoring of the results of the eradication efforts must be supported to develop environmentally responsible and effective eradication methods. Problems associated with lower mating success of irradiated males, and relatively poor effectiveness of some of the beneficial parasites released on Maui to control fruit flies point up the need for continued emphasis on basic research.

While we concur with the intent of HCR 3, some of the WHEREAS clauses are not precisely accurate and should be amended. For example:

The sixth "WHEREAS" clause, implies that all fruit flies were eradicated from Mexico by the sterile insect release method. This is not true. Only the Mediterranean fruit fly has been declared eradicated (but it is our understanding that even this may not be so). There are still a number of other fruit fly species in Mexico, particularly the Mexican fruit fly, that continue to be serious agricultural pests and for which quarantines and commodity treatment are required before fruit can be sent to the U.S. The clause should be amended to read:a technique that was successful in eradicating (or reducing) Mediterranean fruit flies in Mexico;

The seventh "WHEREAS" clause states that the USDA has initiated a biological control program in Kula Maui....etc. It should be noted that this was an experimental inundative parasite release program which is a form of biological control. However, biological control of fruit flies through the breeding and liberation of parasites has been carried out for more than 50 years by the Department of Agriculture and USDA. Biological control of fruit flies is not a new initiative in Hawaii.

The first BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clause states that the DOA and the GACC are mentioned as cooperating with the USDA on fruit fly research. There is no mention of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources of the University of Hawaii. Many CTAHR researchers are actively engaged in cooperative research projects with USDA related to fruit flies and fruit fly eradication. We believe that CTAHR should be added to the list of cooperating agencies.

We concur with the intent of this resolution to commend the USDA particularly with regard to their specific efforts to develop biologically and environmentally acceptable methodologies without recourse to aerial applications of pesticides for fruit fly control.